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EXPLORING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS FOR TOURIST GUIDES: EVIDENCE FROM EGYPT

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Tourist Guides, like all employees within the travel (Tourism) industry must be aware of the needs of travelers (Tourists) and adjust their service and products accordingly, to accomplish this goal TGs are expected to process knowledge of guiding. This paper measures the degree of the influence of the area of study and the level of knowledge on experienced TGs through a study conducted on 200 of 6846 the working population of TGs in 2005, licensed to work in the field by the Ministry of Tourism in Egypt. The study used a self-administered questionnaire that revealed important results showing defects in the areas of study and shortage in the knowledge background of the TGs to a certain extend. The conclusion of the study will propose a guiding scheme to develop a certain standard of education and knowledge needed by TGs in Egypt in their drive towards professional recognition, in order to be able to perform effectively in an increasingly competitive field.

Keywords: tour guides (TG), area of study, knowledge background, Egypt

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

At the start of the millennium tourism was recognized as the number one industry (WTO, 2007^b) dedicated to encouraging people to travel for pleasure and business (Collins, 2002), and as being the world's fastest expanding and largest industry in the world (Saayman et al., 2003), it had a considerable impact on local development trends in terms of foreign exchange earning and job creation (GDRC, 2007). Tourism showed a positive growth rate since 1950 as the number of international arrivals was only 25m., and as the result of the rising interest in art, culture and history, Cultural tourism had undergone a rapid growth (Munters et al., 2005), and the number of international arrivals reached in 2005 806m. (WTO, 2007^a) corresponding to an average annual growth rate of 6.5%.

It is noteworthy to mention that traveling from one place to another throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was encouraged by

the urge to explore or to research (Ponds, 1993). By the nineteenth century Egypt as becoming a center of historic and cultural activities witnessed its first major development specifically after the French expedition to Egypt in 1798-1801, as it led to the revealing of the Egyptian heritage and encouraging the desire for travel to Egypt (Soliman, 1996).

The book of Vivant Denon “Voyage dans la basse et l'haute Égypte” that was published in 1802, and the “Description d’Égypte” published in 1809-1829 that consisted of four folio volumes of text on antiquities, two (in three parts) on the état moderne, and two (in five parts) on natural history. Plus five grand folio volume of plates covered Egyptian antiquities (Reid, 2002), in addition to the numerous drawings of Dozatte, Marilhatte, Brechmier, Terome, Frontan, Dongon, Market, and Figier featuring the beauty of Egypt, were a kind of indirect advertising to travel to Egypt, travelers started pouring to Egypt in large numbers seeking either knowledge or fortune (Diab, 1994).

The flourishing of roads, trade, and economy in general, led to the expansion of travel industry (Clot, 1982), the number of transit customers through Egypt leaped from 275 in 1844 to 3,000 in 1847 (Reid, 2002), and due to the remarkable increase in the number of travelers between the years 1848 – 1879 (El-Rafey, 1948), the government started issuing regulations to organize the services offered to the travelers, who spent a lot of £60-£80 during three months stay in Egypt (Reid, 2002). Among the first services was the tour guide (TG) who emerged immediately as a result of the expansion of the industry of travel, and he became the intermediary between the region and the visitors. Abbas I as the ruler of Egypt from 1848 to 1854 issued the 1849 regulation stating that only licensed TGs by the government would be allowed to conduct visitors through the different sites in Egypt for a fee of 150 Egyptian piaster which was considered enough for the TG to lead a wealthy life. The 1849 regulation covered conduct and even personal cleanliness. Also, TGs were required to get a certificate from the visitors themselves to prove that they adequately performed in their work (Diab, 1994). This procedure was to protect both visitors and TGs. By all accounts, licensing improved the quality of the TGs and improved their status.

The previous was followed by the inauguration of the Suez Canal as an international event on the 17th of November 1869, and the number of tourists increased to 77,776, after it was 17,435 tourists in the year 1848 (Diab, 1994) reflects an increase of 346.1% in the number of tourists. Since then and onwards the twentieth century, Heritage attractions generated tourism (Papathanasiou-Zurt et al., 2005) towards Egypt and

heritage tourism - as defined by the UNESCO (UNESCO, 2007) in the Paris convention 1972 - became the primary product of tourism that gained significant attention as a political and economic engine for local and national interest, and generated new social relations and new ways of living (Tazim et al., 2005; Jamison, 1995).

Substantially Egypt became a major destination and the number of tourists in 2005 reached 8.2m. corresponding to 21.1% of the international tourist arrivals to the Middle East (WTO, 2007^a). Thus, in the growing movement toward organizing and professionally accrediting positions within the travel industry, the Ministry of Tourism was established. TGs developed a deeper understanding of their field, by the year 1965 the first official TG association was founded. In 1983 the EGTGS Egyptian Tourist Guides Syndicate the largest tourist guide association in Africa was created (EGTGS, 2006). It established a very sophisticated database about their members in order to maintain working conditions for guides including salaries, benefits, and status (Khalifa, 2005).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

According to WFTGA (The World Federation Tourist Guides Association), a TG, is the person that possesses a licence issued or recognized by the appropriate authority in the the country concerned, or where the domestic legislation of the country concerned does not provide for such licence, has received in-depth guide training leading to qualification and/or recognition by the relevant local, regional or national authority, is as well the one who guides visitors within that specific country or area of that country in order to provide special information and explanation on matters relating to the history, archeology, monuments and works of art, cultural development, natural beauty, places of intrest, and in general any matter which may promote the country for the purpose of tourism (WFTGA, 2003 & 2006)

Therefore, guides, site interpreters as being the front line for sightseeing, the ones who gives commentary and makes visitors feel welcome in a specific destination, (Braidwood et al., 2000; Ham et al., 2000; Weiler et al., 2000; Omar et al., 1998; Ponds, 1993) need a certain level of education within the tourism sector - as being the largest service industry employing more people than any other industry, that need more education institutions offering tourim programmes among which is tour

guide principles - in order to establish their identity and image (Saayman et al., 2003).

In Egypt one who desires to work as a TG should be licensed by the Ministry of Tourism and be a member of the Egyptian Guides Syndicate according to article (2) in the law issued in 1983 no. 121 to organize the work of TGs in Egypt (Ministry of Tourism, 1983). So certified TG is either one (aged 21 years and above with no graduation limitation) who is required to pass a formal licensing tests in fundamental knowledge of Egypt history, museums, cultural attraction and a foreign language that is developed by the Ministry of Tourism article (3), or a graduate of a Faculty of Tourism, guiding department, (such as the Faculty of Tourism in Alexandria). As a result the number of licensed TGs in Egypt showed an almost steady percentage increase since 1983 till 2005 (Table 1), apart from that year 1993, as the percentage was 123.16 which is considered a very high percentage, and that was a result of the increase of the number of graduates of the faculties and institutions of Tourism established all over Egypt. And 2005 the percentage was 6.75 as the researcher started her research in March 2005, while the statistics are registered annually by the end of December.

Based on the previous information, this study was undertaken to evaluate the influence of the areas of study, knowledge background and personal skills on experienced working TGs in Egypt. In order to measure the affect of the level of education on being a professional TG, the range of knowledge and to what extent it affects his relationship with tourists, all enveloped with his personal skills that is considered as an important factor to be a professional TG. In essence, this means presenting descriptive statistics based on the opinion of the respondents to determine: the sides of strength and weakness in education, knowledge background and personal skills of experienced working TGs in Egypt in an attempt to propose a guiding scheme for curriculum designing, with the hope to initiate new debates and ideas, and to determine the key knowledge and skills required by TGs, to perform professionally in the field of tourism.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study was testing two main hypotheses stated as follows:

H1: The efficiency of TGs is affected by the knowledge background.

H2: The efficiency of TGs is affected by the personal skills.

Table 1. Numbers of Tourist Guides in Egypt 1983-2005.

Year	No. of guides	% of growth
1983	1021	-
1988	1533	50.15
1993	3421	123.16
1998	5223	52.67
2003	7869	50.66
2005	8400	6.75

Source: (Ministry of Tourism, 1995/1996:131; 2003:105; Statistics driven from the syndicate).

METHODOLOGY

The study is an analytical case study divided into two main sections. The reviews of literature displays a historical background on the industry of tourism focusing on Egypt and the evolution of the tour guiding business, the literature study was based on journal articles, books, and similar studies, the internet played a role in this study. The case study of which data was collected from the questionnaires distributed among a random sample of TGs. The questionnaire was mainly based on the study developed on previous studies (Collins, 2002; Braidwood, 2000; Ponds, 1993), the review of literature therein and the researcher view. Face validity and reliability of the questionnaire was applied through two experts; one in the field of tour guiding and one academic. The questionnaire was reviewed and according to the remarks given, the final version of the questionnaire included translation of the statements into Arabic to give freedom for the respondents who do not comprehend English to answer by the convenient language to him/her. The questionnaire was divided into four parts; the first part was concerned with evaluating TGs' areas of study, and consisted of fifteen statements to know to what extent the respondents beneficated from his/her study. The second part was concerned with measuring the knowledge background of the TGs in eleven statements. The third part was consisted of seventeen statements to get acquainted with the personal skills of the TG. While the fourth part concluded nine statements focusing on the challenges that prevent a TG from professionalism. The respondents were required to answer according the Likert scale that ranges from (1) to (5), as (1) matches strongly disagree answer, while (5) matches strongly agree answer.

TGs were requested to fill the questionnaire in aspect to their experience. Two hundred self-administered questionnaires were distributed by the researcher in the branches of the syndicate in Alexandria, Cairo and Luxor in March 2005, representing a sample size of about 2% of the total population of TGs and about 2.9% of the working population of TGs in Egypt. It took about seven months to complete distribution, that produced 140 questionnaires representing a response rate of 70%. It is noteworthy to mention that it was difficult to assemble a large number of TG in one time, for it is known that tour guiding is a freelance kind of work, and TGs are not committed to work definite working hours on a steady basis in an organization or institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The profile of the respondents highlighted specific characteristics of respondents related to gender, years of experience and level of education. The results revealed that male TGs which represent 70% of the respondents exceeded their female counterparts which represent 30%. This result is due to that the ratio of male TGs to females' about 2:1 (EGTGS, 2006).

As for the work experience approximately 58% of the respondents were working in the field for a period that is less than 5 years, 28% their work experience ranges from 5 to 10 years, and only 5% had a work experience profile that is more than 20 years.

An average of 95% of respondents obtained their license as being graduates of a Faculty of Tourism guiding department, (62% B.SC. graduate and 33% post graduate Diploma), while 5% undertaken the test developed by the Ministry of Tourism.

Table 2 shows the results regarding the evaluation of the importance of the area of the study for TGs. According to the results collected from the respondents; the statements from S1-S4 acquired an average score that ranged between (4.4-4.1), S1 with an average score of (4.4) indicating that the areas of study of TGs need improvement as there were a kind of conformity of their need to read, read and read before arriving at any destination.

As for the S2, S3 and S4 with an average score of (4.2), (4.1) and (4.1) respectively enlightened that TGs demonstrated an understanding to several educational concepts of which TGs formulate a clear picture of their place and establish an appropriate professional path, although the

previous learning concepts are not independent courses taught to students in the Faculty of Tourism, but they are relevant to learning from work.

While the average score of the statements from S5-S14 dropping from above average (3.6) to average (3) clarified that several learning concepts such as research, business and marketing, public speaking skills and social skills are concepts that need improvement.

Concerning the last statement with the least average score of (2.5), the respondents denied that what they have learned was not functional in their career path.

Overall if we take a look at the final total average score (3.6), it is clear that this score is above average which means that areas of study undertaken by TGs need improvement and development, specially methodologies of research, psychology, business and marketing in the industry of Tourism and in TG business, customer service and customer behavior. For there is a world wide trend toward developing and adhering to high standards, educational and training programs to TGs, such as The Professional Guides Association of America (PGAA) established in 1987, that has created a Professional Development Committee to develop the first national designation for professionalism in guiding, the Certified Professional Guide (CPG) (Ponds, 1993), The professional Tour Guide of Australia Inc, (PTGAA), Association Professionnelle des Guide Touristiques (APGT) (WFTGA, 2000-2001). The Association of Professional Tourist Guides, and the Guild of registered Tourist Guides in London.....ect. (Collins, 2002). All approved that TGs should have a pervasive understanding of many subject areas; transfer procedures, accommodation check-ins, conducting walking and coach tours, know how to research for different tours, how to deliver commentaries for different groups, environmental issues, show personal awareness, know how to sell excursions, execute administration and paperwork, use the microphone and ones voice, study law, customer care, body language, map reading, marketing and finding work, and get on with colleagues (Ponds, 1993).

Table 2. Evaluation of the importance of the Areas of study for TGs

Statements	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Average score
S1-I always read, read, and read before arriving at any destination.	1		2		3		4		5				
S2-I was trained to give my clients over view of an area focusing on their particular interests.	2	1	4	3	10	7	48	34	76	54			4.4
S3-I learnt exactly the guide's role, and how to fulfill a variety of functions.	5	4	8	6	14	10	46	33	67	48			4.2
S4-I learnt how to take care of my customers and delivering commentaries for day tours.	1	1	11	8	18	13	58	41	52	37			4.1
S5-I learnt how to research for information using academic methods.	5	4	8	6	17	12	48	34	62	44			4.1
S6-I know all the details about the monumental sites all over Egypt.	5	4	12	9	37	26	45	32	41	29			3.8
S7-The business& marketing aspects of guiding that I learnt helped me in my business.	5	4	18	13	28	20	60	43	29	21			3.6
S8-I learnt how to read a map during my study.	10	7	13	9	37	26	42	30	38	27			3.6
S9-I was obliged to have course in travel& tourism before I was licensed to work as a guide.	9	6	19	14	26	19	52	37	34	24			3.6
S10-Cultural awareness as one of the basic courses of guiding I had studied.	10	7	27	19	33	24	36	26	34	24			3.4
S11-I received a course in safety& first aid that was very crucial for me during my tours.	5	4	20	14	50	36	43	31	22	16			3.4
S12-The amount of study I received, was exactly required in the field.	23	16	17	12	25	18	32	23	43	31			3.4
S13-My area of study covered a course in public speaking skills.	6	4	26	19	53	38	29	21	26	19			3.3
S14- Social skills is one of the topics of study I had undertaken.	15	11	24	17	56	40	34	24	11	8			3
S15-By the time I have finished school, half of what I have learned is non-functional.	15	11	28	20	49	35	32	23	16	11			3
	33	24	38	27	43	31	21	15	5	4			2.5
Total	149		273		496		626		556				3.6

In table 3, S1 with an average score of (4.6), stated how the accumulated personal experience would benefit TG in his/her course of work. Followed by the statements S2-S5 with an average score that ranged between (4.5-4.3) highlighted on some of the enriching routine for TGs in their work path, as forming informative background of the local history of any destination, researching with passion for new information, being environmentally aware and keeping updated with current event, for positive and passionate attitude of professional tour guide provide stimulating presentation, as passion is the essential ingredient for effective interpretation, as much passionate is TGs about people and their topic as they more likely to connect with the group (Fanning, 2005; Interpretation, principle & theory, 2007).

S6 average score is (4), showed that the respondents did not feel any awkwardness in carrying light weight references in their bags. But S9 which scored (3.8) pointed that how the respondents political awareness would affect their attitude towards certain nationalities, as a matter of fact it is considered nearly high, for professional TGs should acquire a professional attitude in their business. The same would apply for S11 that posed a score mean of (3.4) showing that 48% of the respondents feel a sense of guilt and inadequacy for not having answers for all questions.

By the end of the previous illustration the respondents in table (3) confirmed on the importance of the wide knowledge background for TGs, as it is obvious from the (4.1) total average score which proved H1. So TGs must be up to date with the latest in methods, technologies and trends, eventually continuous professional development is the major essential component for professionalism, and Rennie (2005) as a professional tourist guide marked that reading relevant books, visiting tourist attraction, subscribing to industry publication and journals, research, taking courses in customer service, attending seminars and workshops get TG prepared to exceed customers' expectations.

Table 4 showed the results regarding the evaluation of personal skills for TGs, S1 with an average score of (4.5) showed how the respondents regard their work as an act of passion and a reflection of their interest. The same average score was acquired by S2 which displayed an important aspect in the business of tour guiding, and that TGs are asked to conduct different kinds of tours for a wide variety of travelers, so TGs should be understandable to the difference of the travelers.

Table3. Evaluation of the importance of the Knowledge background for TGs

Statements	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Average score
	1	2	3	4	5						
S1-I benefit from others personal experience which add a special dimension to my commentary.	0	-	2	1	10	7	37	26	91	65	4.6
S2-At the beginning of a tour day, I give a brief outline of the local history of the region.	2	1	2	1	8	6	45	32	83	59	4.5
S3-I feel research is a pleasure, not a chore specially when traveling to areas I have passionate interest in	2	1	4	3	11	8	47	34	76	54	4.4
S4-En route of my tours, I give special attention to the natural environment (flora fauna, weather & geography) of the area.	1	1	5	4	16	11	52	37	66	47	4.3
S5-I keep up to the minute about current events through radio, T.V., magazines, and daily newspapers.	2	1	0	-	20	14	44	31	74	53	4.3
S6- I usually keep lightweight reference books tucked into my shoulder bag during my tours.	3	2	9	6	22	16	53	38	53	38	4
S7- Although I am very busy, I find the time for reading.	3	2	6	4	29	21	60	43	42	30	3.9
S8- I discovered by experience how unimportant so many of the things that we place enormous significance on, really are.	0	-	9	6	44	31	46	33	41	29	3.9
S9-My awareness of national & international politics affects my attitude towards clients of certain nationality.	9	6	17	12	20	14	40	29	54	39	3.8
S10-I have high sense of lasting arts	6	4	10	7	30	21	50	36	44	31	3.8
S11-I feel a sense of guilt and inadequacy for not having answers for all the questions.	16	11	15	11	42	30	32	23	35	25	3.4
Total	44		79		252		506		659		4.1

Statements from 3 to 7 with an average score of (4.4) reflected several traits such as enthusiastic personality, decisive, well-organized and self-confident with high personal integrity. While S16 and S17 acquired a score mean of (3.7) stating that 37% of the respondents in S16 find some difficulty in remembering names faces and facts, and 42% in S17 do not have sense of direction which form a kind of inconsistency with what was mentioned in S5, as 89% of the respondents agreed to being detail-oriented and well-organized planner.

According to the average score (4.3) of S8 and S9, 85% and 88% respectively of the respondents were self-starters that could work without supervision, disciplined and flexible. While S14 and S15 with an average score of (3.9), 26% and 33% respectively of the respondents see unexpected problems as obstacles, also they are not resourceful and not creative when faced with unexpected difficulty. It is obvious from the above that some of the respondents showed vagueness concerning some of the skills should be acquired by TGs.

In S10, 85% of the respondents said that they have a great sense of humor as well as endless enthusiasm and energy. According to several researches enthusiasm plus the sense of humor in a TG would bring tourist and guide closer together through the guiding experience.

Statements 11-13 showed an average score of (4.1), describing some of the qualities that I believe evitable for TG being emotionally steady and in good health. Rennie (2005) asserted that good and robust physical health and mental strength are amongst the TGs touring companion.

The total average score (4.2), reflected the necessity of certain personal skills for professional TG which proved H2, and that goes matching to the results of several studies which picture an image of TG's important qualities. Stating that TG must be committed to lifelong learning (Ponds, 1993), therefore, they should acquire book-keeping experience, enjoy doing research, have an insatiable curiosity about the world and what makes people ticks (Rennie, 2005; Collins, 2002). Also these studies clarified that personal skills being qualities needed for effective guiding, some are natural and unteachable, but others must be taught or, at least, described and demonstrated; those are being enthusiastic, sensitive, self-confident, flexible, organized, with an outgoing, pleasant, proactive nature, sense of humor, good health, and charisma (Ponds, 1993).

Table 4. Evaluation of the importance of the personal skills for TGs

Statements	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Average score
S1-I enjoy meeting and working with people of all backgrounds.	1	-	2	-	3	-	4	-	5	-	
S2-I am intrigued by respectful of different customs, even those that seems strange to me.	1	1	0	-	11	8	46	33	82	59	4.5
S3-I love to travel anywhere and every where.	0	-	1	1	8	6	50	36	81	58	4.5
S4-I am able to make decisions quickly when necessary and am willing to stand by my decisions.	3	2	5	4	12	9	37	26	83	59	4.4
S5-I am detail-oriented, well-organized planner.	0	-	1	1	11	8	64	46	64	46	4.4
S6-I am a good listener.	0	-	4	3	12	9	54	39	70	50	4.4
S7-I have a strong sense of ethics.	0	-	3	2	9	6	56	40	72	51	4.4
S8-I am a self-starter and work well without direct supervision.	3	2	1	1	10	7	65	46	63	45	4.4
S9-I can plan and stick to a timetable, but I am also flexible and creative when I see unexpected opportunities.	0	-	1	1	15	11	65	46	59	42	4.3
S10-I have a great sense of humor as well as endless enthusiasm and energy.	0	-	1	1	20	14	64	46	55	39	4.2
S11-I have a steady, even temperament and seldom become flustered.	2	1	5	4	26	19	56	40	51	36	4.1
S12-I seldom take a complaint personally, especially when it is about something I cannot control.	0	-	2	1	25	18	64	46	49	35	4.1
S13-I am in good health, and am able to work for hours with the same stamina.	1	1	8	6	22	16	60	43	49	35	4.1
S14-I see unexpected problems as challenges, not as obstacles.	2	1	5	4	30	21	62	44	41	29	3.9
S15-I am resourceful and creative when faced with an unexpected difficulty.	2	1	9	6	36	26	54	39	39	28	3.9
S16-I can remember names, faces, and facts easily.	4	3	13	9	35	25	51	36	37	26	3.7
S17-I have a good sense of direction.	4	3	13	9	42	30	46	33	35	25	3.7
Total	22		74		341		943		1000		4.2

Table 5. Challenges preventing a tour guide from professionalism

Statements	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Average score
	1		2		3		4		5				
1-To be a guide (to introduce visitors to their regions, to facilitate an environment of learning and exchange, and to be of service to travelers.) is a privilege and joy.	1	1	2	1	5	4	19	14	113	81			4.7
2-To formulate a broad-based knowledge about the region.	0	-	4	3	6	4	39	28	91	65			4.6
3- Must have a thorough understanding of their industry and their place within it.	0	-	0	-	10	7	46	33	84	60			4.5
4-Must have an understanding of his/her business.	0	-	2	1	11	8	46	33	81	58			4.5
5-Must learn a great deal about a variety of subjects.	0	-	0	-	9	6	47	34	84	60			4.5
6-Using many resource materials to expand knowledge about a variety of subjects.	1	1	2	1	10	7	42	30	85	61			4.5
7-Must be committed to life-long learning.	2	1	5	4	10	7	46	33	77	55			4.4
8-Be sensitive towards people, their needs, their beliefs and feelings.	0	-	1	1	13	9	65	46	61	44			4.3
9-Without real passion, a guide's knowledge is essentially meaningless.	14	10	3	2	9	6	33	24	81	58			4.2
Total	18		19		83		383		757				4.5

Table 5 attained a total average score of (4.5), as the respondents acknowledged that without the thorough understanding of the industry of Tourism, the nature of nowadays tourist (McCabe, 2005), and the place of TG within, his roles and duties as being ambassador, diplomat, entertainer, historian, psychologist, translator, mind reader and miracle worker, would formulate challenges preventing a TG from professionalism. Therefore, TGs should have an out-going personality with solid preparation and lots of hard work, depending on some formal education, keeping open to every possible way of improving his/her knowledge background. Also need to know employers working in the tourism industry to stand in a better position and solve any problem may occur with clients or colleagues (Braidwood et al., 2000). Furthermost TGs should know how to arise the audience imagination, to enrich the visitor's experience, to provoke curiosity and interest and to reveal a memorable experience (Papathanasiou et al., 2005; Coccossis, 2005; Rusk, 1994; Ponds, 1993).

CONCLUSION

The study revealed some defects in the areas of study undertaken by the tour guides in academic institutions in Egypt, as it seems that most if not all the courses focus on; History of Egypt during different eras, History of Egyptian arts, Ancient Egyptian civilization, and Egyptian monuments (Faculty of Tourism, Alexandria University) (Ministry of Tourism, 2003).

However, the research showed an interaction connection among the area of study, knowledge background and personal skills. For the respondents depended in their work mostly on expanding their knowledge background by depending on others personal experience, forming a solid background on a destination region through research and studying the environment of the surrounding, following the current national and international events through the media, but that does not prevent him/her from keeping lightweight references books during his/her tours, and investing time in reading and tasting arts.

On the other hand, the respondents' benefited from their nature given personal skills in a freelance kind of work, as they showed real enjoyment in working with no formal restrains, under different circumstances and in different places, but with a sense of responsibility and ethics toward the clients as being detail-oriented, well-organized and good listener. Also they demonstrated the importance of being flexible

and creative with a sense of humor, enthusiasm and energy, in addition to being in good health and emotionally steady.

RECOMMENDATION AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Relating to importance of tourist guiding in the tourism industry, Coccossis (2005) suggested that TGs need to be carefully selected, trained, motivated, monitored and regularly evaluated. So, it seems to be essential to educate guides in the best manner possible, and attempting to create a national theme curriculum among academic institutions and tour guide syndicate, by developing the educational programs adhered by the institutions, and the training courses organized by the syndicate under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Tourism, in order to deliver a well educated and trained tour guide capable of taking care of his/her customers, able to make places come alive, informative, interesting, and entertaining. As it is important to note that in Egypt professional guides are required to attain a certain standard of performance, however, guiding departments does not offer guide training, and guides who are willing to be trained in the field either are self-taught or learnt from other experienced guides, in some cases work as a local guide in one region. So it could be said that a guide, as a representative of his/her country, obliged to be culturally literate meaning one who provides a skilled, knowledgeable presentation, informs, interprets and highlights the surroundings and maintains objectivity and enthusiasm in a courteous and polite manner.

Therefore, this study could propose some future research studies for guides that possibly would be adopted by the academic institutions, in order to lead TGs to form a deeper understanding of the industry of tourism and the TG within and to promote professionalism in an increasingly competitive field. These topics are suggested to be divided into two categories; core and additional courses: The core courses could inbound concepts and characteristics of Tourism, nature and characteristics of Tourists, history of Egypt in different eras, geography, architecture of Egypt in different eras and art history of Egypt in different eras. While the additional courses that would form a kind of balance and development in both knowledge and skills of TGs might include interpretation, communication skills, social skills, public speaking skills, cross culture understanding, ethics, business and marketing aspects of guiding and safety and first aid. Also we could follow the foot steps of the University of Cyprus and form useful links with the WFTGA to make

guiding skills more marketable and improve the standards of tourist guiding through a series of international seminars for enhancing tourist guide techniques and upgrading the standards of tourist guiding (WFTGA, 2007).

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